

Not Baal, but the LORD:
OR THE
Prophet's Plea for Truth.

A
S E R M O N
Preach'd in the Parish-Church of
LEDBURY in HEREFORDSHIRE,
April the 23^d. 1710.

By *JOHN WALKER*, M. A.
Vicar of *Ledbury*.

If any Man Teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome Words; even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness; He is Proud, knowing nothing, but doting about Questions, and Strifes of Words; whereof cometh Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmisings; Perverse Disputings of Men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thy self. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4, 5.

L O N D O N,
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TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

GEORGE

Lord Bishop of BATH and WELLS.

MY LORD,

HOPING that the following Discourse
may do some good in the world, either
as it may rectifie the erroneous, or those that
are out of the Way; Or as it may confirm
and settle those that are in the right one;
Or as it may be a just Apology and Defence
for my self, and the rest of my Order in the
Discharge of our Function and Office as Mi-
nisters of Christ, I have thought fit to give

DEDICATION.

it a more public Appearance than the Preaching it to a private Auditory can possibly amount unto. *This is all that I aim at and intend herein.* And I may in Justice expect that the Reader will make no other Conclusion from what he shall meet with, than the true Literal Construction of the Words does suggest. If Words be the Interpreter and Declarer of the Mind, as they ought to be and are with all Men of Probity; it is highly disingenuous and unchristian, to give them any other Turn or Meaning, than what in their own Native Sence they bear and denote. They, that right or wrong will do this do indeed shew what Temper they are of none of the best, let me assure them. And turn but once the Tables, and make it their own Case, and they will quickly perceive how unequitable and unfair it is, and call it by worse Names than I judge fit to repeat. However, if Men's Thoughts are not to be understood suitably to their words, but by some secret, obscure Reserves and Innuendo's some shall unjustly scent and find out, or at least pretend they do, farewell all use of Speech, and we shall in the worst Sence of the Phrase, be Barbarians one to another. I had once thought that such a Caution had been utterly needless; but when some Men have given so just an Occasion for it, I think every sober Writer hath need to guard himself as well as

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as he can, and desire to appeal to more righteous Judges. I have been careful to avoid all ambiguous Forms of Speech, or what may be capable of a double Meaning, and upon that Account have the less Reason to dread the envenomed Darts of such malicious Shooters. But notwithstanding when such Men have lost all Sence of Modesty, good Reasoning, common Civility, and necessary Justice, we are not to expect the fairest Treatment from them. Some Dirt will be thrown by them, and we have good luck if we can scape being sullied in the common Estimate. In such a Case we must, with the Apostles, betake our selves to that impregnable Bulwark, and safe Refuge, the testimony of a good Conscience; that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God we had our Conversation in the World. If we have this, we need not fear ought else. We may (as St. Paul speaks) be troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; Cast down, but not destroyed. This is an inexhausted Treasury and Spring, against all the Evils of an evil World. And this being the Result of a true Fear of and Obedience paid to God and his Word, and what is the proper and full Import and Business of this Discourse, I hope I have not given
any

2 Cor. 1.

12.

1b. 4. 8, 9

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any just Cause of Offence to any. If they will causlessly take it, that they must blame themselves for. It is my Business to Preach and assert Truth. And as to this, whatsoever some may imagine and flatter themselves with, a Necessity unavoidable is laid upon every Minister of the Gospel. And they that do not in Sincerity and Integrity perform it, what can they expect but that Woe St. Paul threatned himself with, when he

1 Cor. 9. 16. says, Woe is unto me if I Preach not the Gospel. If to avoid this, and to shew our Concern for the Honour of our Lord, we exert an honest, decent, and well regulated Zeal,

Rom. 12. 11. are fervent in Spirit, as the Gospel commands, this sure must be its own Justifier, when it is to depress Sin and advance Righteousness.

They that can behold the many provoking Impieties of the present Age, the still widening Divisions of it especially, with a Calmness and Indifferency of Temper; instead of having a commendable Zeal, are possess'd and Hag-ridden with a most mischievous Luke-warmness. And if this is the Moderation some Men so earnestly plead for and would recommend, God Almighty, I beseech him, for ever deliver me from so great and unchristian a Coldness and Unconcernedness in my Master's Business. It is better, I think, to be

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be somewhat too hot in so good a work, than so very Key-cold. I own that Meekness, Humility, and Charity are Christian Graces, and what we ought to be full of; and I doubt not but that we may be so, and yet not betray the Cause of Christ. Truth is of greatest Importance, and should have most of our Concern. And we are principally to regard and secure that, and then as much as men please of these. But let us not exchange the one for the other, or rather for its meer Visor and Shadow, when there can be no true Grace, where there is no Truth. Truth is the Mistress, these but its Hand-maids, and therefore I must confess that I prefer this to them. Not, that I have forgotten to give them their proper place in the Defence of it, when I have diligently avoided all indecent and uncharitable Expressions, Truth not wanting such a Support, and being more prejudic'd than help'd by it.

As it is, I make bold to present it to your Lordship, as an humble Testimony of those grateful Resentments I have for your many Favours, and of that just Regard and Honour I have for you, and all the Right Reverend Fathers of the Church, that are Fathers indeed. Of which excellent Constellation of Worthies, all, that know you, cannot but esteem and judge you to be a truly Shining

DEDICATION.

*ning Star, when your Merits and Integrity
are equally Great, and Conspicuous, and Ve-
nirable. I am,*

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most Obedient

and Respectful Son and Servant,

in the Work of the Gospel,

JOHN WALKER.

I KINGS xviii. 21.

*And Elijah came unto all the People, and said,
How long halt ye between two Opinions? If
the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal,
then follow him.*

GOD Almighty being the Great Lord and Governor of Heaven and Earth, hath it in his Power, as well as it is his Right, to punish with any of his fore Judgments, either the Famine, the Pestilence, or the Sword, any Sinful Nation and People. But this he doth frequently upon some merciful and kind Design; to make them reflect and consider what hath been the Occasion and Cause of the Pressure and Distress that is upon them; to give them a Sight and Sence of their Sinfulness; to stop them in the Madness of their Career and Folly, and to bring them to Reformation and Amendment.

The Men of *Israel* in the Days of this Prophet, as well as before, were guilty of very great and most abominable Provocations; had made large Declensions from God's Ways and Truths; had separated themselves from the Altar and way of Worship He had established in the Temple at *Hierusalem*, and set up *Golden Calves* 1 Kings 12.
in *Dan* and *Bethel*, and in the Houses of the 28, 29, 30, 31.
High Places to be Worshipped and Sacrificed unto. And tho' this thing became sin unto the 16. 13. 34.
house of *Jeroboam*, even to cut it off, and destroy it from off the face of the earth (as the Histo-

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rian informs us.) Yet his Successors in the Throne of *Israel* pursued and continued the same Sinful and Idolatrous Courses. Reasons of State were more prevalent with them, than Reasons of Religion. They had more regard for Empire and Rule, than for the Laws of God; were jealous and suspicious, that, if their Subjects should continue to go to Worship where God had appointed, their Hearts too would return, and the Kingdom be again confirmed to the House of *David*. Worldly Interest had so warp'd and seduc'd them to act amiss, that they would not obey and trust God, nor believe his Prophets. They would be a Rule unto themselves in spite of all that they had seen and heard. Such were the Reigns of *Jeroboam*, *Nadab*, *Baasha*, *Zimri*, and *Omri*; so horribly bent upon Wickedness. And one would have thought that it had been then at its utmost Summit and Height. But *Ahab the Son* and Successor of *Omri*, did in evil far surpass all his Predecessors. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sin of *Jeroboam the Son of Nebat*, that he took to Wife *Jezabel the Daughter of Eth-Baal, King of the Zidonians*, and went and served *Baal*, and worshipped him. And he reared up an Altar for *Baal* in the house of *Baal*, which he had built in *Samaria*. And *Ahab* made a Grove; And *Ahab* did more to provoke the Lord God of *Israel* to anger, than all the Kings of *Israel* that were before him.

And as was the Prince, so were the People, all for the most part Schismatics and Separatists from the true Worship of God. And manifest is it that there was a general Defection and Corruption amongst them, when the Prophets of *Baal*, and of the Groves were eight hundred

1 Kings 16.
31, 32, 33.

16. 18. 19,
22.

dred and fifty men, and *Elijah* only the Prophet of the Lord, as he tells us. The Court-Religion or Worship had a mighty Influence upon them. They thought it (as too commonly it happens) the readiest way to get Preferment, and become rich by. They preferr'd this to all other Considerations. If they could but thus Sacrifice to their own Net, to their Ambition and their Covetousness, they matter'd not what kind of Service they embrac'd and paid. And indeed the Prospect and Hope of Worldly Gain, is but too powerful a Motive to loose Men from truly religious Principles and Practices; and doth apparently, as the Current of it runs, give a Bias and Propensity to the most distant Extremes. It is the King's Religion, be it ever so bad, that is in this Sense, with some, the best Religion; And what Men of profligate Consciences will always follow and adhere unto. And this, with some other Carnal Politics advanc'd and abetted by their several Kings and their Courtiers, was no doubt that which debauch'd and withdrew the Ten Tribes of the Children of *Israel* from serving God as he had enjoyn'd, and made them so addicted to their own Falsities and Novelties. But when nothing else would reclaim them, and *Jezabel* with the Connivance of the People had outrag'd and kill'd the Prophets and Ministers of the Lord (tho' there was a Good *Obadiah* that rescued and delivered some of them from her furious Assaults) God saw fit to chastise them with a very grievous Drought and Famine of *three years and six months* James 5. 17. continuance, that he might thereby humble and bring them to a more obedient Temper. And when He had thus prepar'd them, he sent his

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Dan. 4. 17.

Prophet to give them a farther Evidence of his Power and Will, and *that the most High ruleth in the Kingdom of men*; and consequently that God, and not Man, is to be regarded and obey'd. And accordingly *Elijah*, having first done his Message to *Abab*, and propos'd to him to gather all *Israel* and all the false Prophets to *Mount Carmel*; and they being there, assembled, he, in the Words of the Text thus addresseth to them. *And Elijah came to all the People and said, How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.*

In my speaking to you of these Words, I purpose by God's Assistance, to give you an Account of these several things.

First, That it is every Man's Duty to be able to discern and know the true Religion, or right way of Worshipping God, from what is false, or contrary thereunto.

Secondly, What Helps God hath given us, or what Rule we are to direct our selves by in order to a right understanding of it.

Thirdly, That, when so known and understood, we are constantly and invariably to adhere and keep to it in our Practice.

Fourthly, That we are to assert and vindicate it, when oppos'd and contradicted.

And *Fifthly* and *Lastly*, That it is the undoubted Interest both of Prince and People to have it well establish'd and preserv'd.

And Elijah came to all the People and said, How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.

First,

First, I am to shew you, That it is every Man's Duty to be able to discern and know the true Religion, or right way of Worshipping God, from what is false, or contrary thereunto.

I. It hath been a Maxim with some Men; that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion; that the less we know of God, the better we can serve Him. But He having made us Reasonable Creatures, and requiring a Rational Service of us; and there being no Reason without Understanding, we must understand and know Him, and what he exacts of us, if we would serve Him aright, and acceptably, and as we ought. We can have no Desire, Faith in, Affection and Regard for what we are ignorant of. And these being necessary Qualifications of the just Performance of Divine Worship, we must have that which is the Foundation to them in us, a fit Knowledge of God and his Truths, e're we can pay him the Prostrations that are due unto him. We may without this bow down to a Figment and Idol of our own Brain and Imagination; but a true Service supposes and implies a true Understanding of God. And this is not to be taken up upon meer hear-say or by rote; but we are diligently to see and consider what Bottom and Ground-work it hath to relie on. Whether it hath been commanded by the true God. Whether there is that Suitableness, and Spiritualness, and Rationalness in the Addresses we make, as is worthy of so August a Majesty. Whether it is not a Stock or Stone, an Image or a Picture (Things too mean to represent the

the God of Heaven) that we worship and fall down unto. Or whether, when we are right as to the Object, we lift up clean Hands and pure Hearts without Wrath and Doubting; do humbly, and sincerely, and fervently, and faithfully, and resignedly offer up our Supplications to the Throne of Grace; and give him the entire Service of Soul and Body in the best manner we can and most for his Honour. Or whether Lastly our Praying unto, Praising and giving him Thanks, be crowned and compleated with a holy Life and Conversation: *The Sacrifice of the wicked being an abomination to the Lord, but the Prayer of the upright his delight.* It is such a Sense and Understanding that is to be in us, as will make us abhor and flee from all false Gods, and all false ways of Worship; as will ingage us to love, fear and obey only the true one; to have him for our God, and no other, and to serve him continually in Spirit and in Truth. It is the Apostle's Command, *to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good;* and that we have our Senses exercis'd to discern both Good and Evil. And if we so examine and exercise our selves in and by the Scriptures, as we shall soon be filled with the knowledge of his Will in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding, so will this prevent all haltings between GOD and Baal, set us in the right way, and keep us regular and stedfast in it, notwithstanding all the Temptations and Seductions, Menaces and Terrors of an evil World. And it being our Duty still to do this; not to be overtaken with the Error of the wicked, to be always abounding in the work of the Lord, it must be such to perceive and be sensible, what will enable us to be so happy. He that requires

Prov. 15. 8.

2 Thess. 5. 21.

Heb. 5. 14.

Col. 3. 9.

requires the End, requires the necessary Means
 conducing thereunto. He that enjoyns us to
 ease from evil, and to learn to do well, doth
 strictly enjoyn that we know how to per-
 form the one and the other. With this we
 may serve God, and do our Duty, but without
 it never can. *This is eternal life to know thee* John 17. 3:
the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast
sent, says our Blessed Lord; that is, to know
 Him in the Truth of his Word, and in a hearty
 Obedience perform'd to it. And we are al-
 way to apply our selves to know, and search,
 and seek out this Heavenly Wisdom, if we
 would so know as to be known and approved
 of by Him.

II. And this will be more manifest, if we
Secondly proceed to consider the Rule God
 hath given us to direct our selves by in
 order to such a Knowledge.

Had God left that Service we render unto
 Him, undetermin'd and under no Command, it
 had been altogether indifferent, how and in
 what manner we perform'd it. Where there is
 no Obligation, as there can be no fulfilling of
 Duty on the one Hand, so no Breach of it on
 the other. But He having prescrib'd us Mea-
 sures whereby we are to walk and order our
 selves, as this cannot be our Case, so neither
 hath he left us at Liberty to do as we please.
 It is his Will, and not the Imaginations of our
 own Hearts, that we are to be guided by. He
 hath shew'd us the way wherein we are to honour
 Him; and therein we are to go, and not to
 deviate and depart from it. The Men of *Israel*
 had been fully instructed in it by *Moses* and
 the

the Prophets ; they could not object, or complain of want of Information. This had been assur'd unto them by undeniable Evidence and Testimony. There was nothing wanting on God's Part to impress it deep on their Heads and Hearts. The Means that had been us'd for their Conviction, was sufficient to satisfy all that were not possess'd with an inflexible Incredulity, and that would hearken unto, and be prevail'd on by Reason and Argument. But if Men will not see, will turn their Eyes from the Light when it is graciously afforded, and held out unto them, it is to their own Obstinacy and Waywardness, and not the Mercy of the Revelation, that they are to impute their being in the wrong. The Word of God doth certainly best teach us what are the Principles and Practice of all that is truly religious. Though we may err and be deceiv'd in the Notions and Notices of Things, yet He that is Omniscient, and infallible in his Dictates, cannot. Nothing is intricate and obscure to an All-comprehensive Understanding and Mind. He can set us in the right way of acting divinely, if we are ever to be so happy. He knows what he most likes, and is most for his own Glory. And the whole of the Service we are to be employ'd in, referring chiefly to him, we are to give him leave to be the sole Arbitrator of it, to receive it humbly and heartily, and to demean our selves correspondently. We are not to prescribe to him, but he to us in the Dutifulness we owe him. His Statutes and Commands are a sure Light, and Lamp and Direction, to all that will follow them. It is to these therefore that we are at all times to apply our selves for saving Knowledge.

to the Law and the Testimony, says the Prophet. Isa. 8. 20. This is the Polar Star we are to steer our Course by, through the fluctuating and dangerous Surges and Tempests of the present Life. And if we are so conducted, as we can never miscarry and go astray; as it will be pure and undefiled Religion that will be acted and exemplified by us, so will God approve of it, and own us for his faithful Servants.

This is certain, that it is our Duty to serve him in all well-pleasing, and to be fruitful in every good Word and Work: But how we can do this, or be that, by running from his Commandments, by slighting and over-looking his Laws, by making false Interpretations of, or acting in flat Contrariety to them, is most absurd and unreasonable to suppose. If God is the Lord, and we are to obey him, it is as evident that we cannot do this by Disobedience. To imagine this, would be to take away the Differences of Good and Evil, and to make Religion and Irreligion, Holiness and Sin, one and the same. But there being an innate Repugnancy between the one and the other; however we may reconcile them in our Practice, they can never be so in the Truth and Nature of the Things themselves. Holiness will be Obedience and Righteousness; and Sin Unrighteousness and Disobedience, though we pervert, misapply and miscall them. *Jeroboam* did indeed declare that the *golden Calves* he had set up, were the Gods that brought the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt; and he might fancy that his sacrificing to them, was a worshipping the God of Israel. But his saying the one, and thinking the other, did not make

1 Kings 12.
28, 32.

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either

either of them true, for it was Idolatry and Schism notwithstanding; a setting up of false Gods, and a Separating from the Worship of the true one. So *Ahab* and *Jezebel*, and their People might persuade themselves that *Baal* too was God, and their Worshipping him was Worshipping God: But whatever they thought, *Baal* was but an Idol, and their Worshipping him a false Worship; as Idolatrous and Schismatical as that of his Predecessor the Son of *Nebat*, who made Israel to Sin.

It is not then Men's false Perswasions of Things, that will justify the acting of them, or be their Excuse before God. Nothing can do this but an Agreement with his Will and Word. If he hath commanded and instituted them, they are safe. But if he hath not, if he hath forbidden them, or they contradict his revealed Will, tho' their own erroneous Consciences do not, yet he will condemn them for it. We are then not only to be fully persuaded in our own Minds of the Lawfulness of what we do, but that God hath injoyn'd and appointed, or at least not forbidden it. And the Reason of this is, because we may be deceiv'd in our Judgments and Conjectures of what is true, or otherwise, but God cannot. In all religious Concerns the better and firmer the Foundation is, the more secure and free from Hazard and Disappointment is what we raise upon it. If we act in Compliance with God's Will, we run no Risks; But if otherwise, nothing can preserve us from falling, and sinning, and offending him, how much soever we think and believe to the contrary. It is by his Law and Word that we are to

be judged in the next Life, and it is by it that John 12. 48. we are to square and regulate our Actions in this. He hath vouchsaf'd to teach and shew us what is Good, and he requires of us, and it must be our indispensable Obligation, Work, and Business to learn of him, and to practise an Universal Piety and Obedience.

III. And this brings me to the Third Particular, That the true Religion so notified by God, is constantly and invariably to be adher'd unto and practis'd by us.

That the Holy Scriptures are the great Pandect or Body of Speculative and Practic Duties, of what we are to believe and do, is what we must all confess. And so far we are in the Right; And happy would it be for us, if we would so far consult and advise with, as in all our Spiritual Affairs to be guided by them. This would stifle and prevent all those many Delusions and Seductions that are so rife among us; that Spirit of Division that so much haunts and disquiets us; that running from God and Truth; that opposing his Will; that crumbling into Sects and Parties, that threatens and portends no less than an universal dis-joynting and unsettling of us. This too would unite and heal the Breaches and Wounds that have been made; would make us humble and modest, and impartially to examine the true Reasons of Things; would open our Eyes to see the Things that make for our Peace; incline us to prefer the Publick Good to our false Sentiments, and unreasonable Bickerings and Heats: Would expel all

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that Stiffness and Uncomplyingness of Humour that is so obstinately and peremptorily assum'd and pursu'd; inspire us with placable and submissive Tempers; fill us with a true Earnestness and Zeal for God's Glory, and incessant Endeavours to serve Him in the best manner, to the most worthy Purposes, and as becometh sincere Christian Professors.

And the Truth is, it is a very surprizing and amazing Thing to see and consider that it is not so: That the Spirit of the Gospel, that meek, humble, and obedient Spirit hath had so little Efficacy upon us; to see Men run so many contrary ways to Heaven, and yet all hope to come thither, when Truth is but one, and there is but one way that leadeth unto Life, that of God's Word. This is *the door* through which we are to enter; and they that are for climbing and getting thither some other way, *are but thieves and robbers*, and will as sadly be defeated and barr'd out. They are the Precepts, and Documents, and Laws we there meet with, that are the standing and fixed Rule of Right and Truth, and Christian Piety. And the prosecuting and fulfilling of these, as it gives us the justest Claim to a real Purity and Holiness of living, so doth it to the Reward and Blessedness it is to dispense, and will be a Consequent of it. It is our firm adhering to these through our whole Lives that is our manifest Duty; and therefore it can only be doing and conversing suitably to it, that can entitle us to the promised Mercy, when this and nothing less is made the peremptory Condition of it. They are not some or a few only, but all the Com-
mands

John 10. 7, 8.

mands of the Gospel, that is the measure of our Religion, and what we are to perform. Tho' Men wickedly separate themselves, and go into Combinations and factious Brotherhoods, they are not to separate Dutifulness, to take one Part of it, and leave another. A Conscience is to be made of, and a due Regard to be had to every several Branch of it. The doing of this will not atone for the Omission of that: We must take and understand them all, as God hath proposed them, without any difference as to the Authority and Obligation: We are in no Case to *despise the word*; we are in all Cases to fear the Commandment. Prov. 13. 13.
Lib. de Confid. God hath made no Exceptions, nor are we to make any. *Excipere est decipere*, says St. Bernard, *to except is to deceive* our selves, and others. God hath commanded as well the Duties of the Second, as first Table of the Decalogue. And it is St. Paul's Rule that we are *to have and exercise a Conscience void of offence* Acts 24. 16. towards God, and towards Men. He hath commanded us to honour and obey himself; and he hath commanded us to do the same to our Exod. 20. 3,
12. Natural and Civil Parents in all that lawfully and of right we ought. *The first and great* Mat. 22. 37,
38, 39. *Commandment is to love the Lord our God; and the second is like unto it, to love our Neighbours as our selves, to do them all the good we can.* He hath commanded us to be just, and *to provide things honest in the sight of all men*; and Rom. 12. 17. so hath he *to love mercy, and to walk humbly.* Micah 6. 8. He hath injoyn'd us to *abhor Idols*, and so hath Rom. 2. 22! he *not to commit Sacrilege.* He hath told us that we are not *to forsake the assembling of our* Heb. 10. 25. *selves together, as the manner of some is; that*
We

Psal. 100. 4. *We are to come into his Courts; to worship and*
 Ib. 95. 6. *fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker:*
 Rom. 16. 17. *So hath he to mark them which cause divisions*
and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have
 Jude ver. 19. *learned. That such are sensual, not having the*
 1 Cor. 3. 3. *Spirit: That Divisions or Factions are Carna-*
 Ib. 1. 10. *lity and a work of the Flesh; and that we are*
 Ib. 11. 40. *all to be perfectly joyned together in the same*
 Psal. 29. 2.] *mind, and the same judgment, as to what he de-*
 Titus 2. 10. *mands of us; That all things are to be done de-*
cently and in order, and that we are to worship
God in the beauty of Holiness. In short, we are
to adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all
things, saith St. Paul. To adorn it with a ho-
ly Life, and undissembled Obedience. Neither
Worldly Interest, nor the pleasing of our selves
and others, nor any Carnal Motive whatso-
ever, is to be so prevalent with us, as ever
to alienate us from Pious Operations, and in-
duce us to act contrary and in Contradiction
to our great Law-giver.

It was the Sin of the Men of *Israel* to halt
 between Him and Wickedness; to be some-
 times for, and sometimes against him; but we
 must (as the Apostle adviseth) *hold fast the faith-*
 ful Word, as we have been taught: We must be
 stedfast and unmoveable. Whatsoever God hath
 prescrib'd, is to be heedfully observ'd by us,
 if we would not deceive our selves; and we
 are to do it as he hath prescrib'd. We are
 to respect both the Matter and Manner of the
 work we are doing, and is incumbent on us.
 We are to do lawful things lawfully. Praying
 and Preaching in publick are lawful Acts in
 themselves; but if they are done in an unju-
 stifiable way, and contrary to the Gospel, with

a se-

by separating and dividing Spirit, they do thereby become wicked; and no Goodness of Intention will justify an evil End. Such a manner of Worship is so far from honouring God, that it is indeed a dishonouring of Him, it being a Breach of his Law, and a plain Disobedience. Schism is look'd upon by some as a trifling thing, and to have nothing of Evil in it; but if it is a causeless and unnecessary one, as I here suppose it, they must give me leave to tell them that they must have a new Gospel, ere they can make it such, God by his Spirit having so apparently condemn'd it in that we have. And if we in Pity, and out of Duty tell them of it, we are certainly not their Enemies, but Friends when we endeavour to undeceive, and deliver them from the wrath to come. We cannot answer it to God and our own Consciences to hold our Peace, not to tell *Judah* of his Sins, when Wickedness is become bold and daring. If we cannot prove it to be contrary to the Holy Word deliver'd unto us, they might have some Reason to fret and be angry; but if we can, and have done it, let them look to it, if they will not be forewarn'd and forsake it. Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, we are to *cry aloud and spare not*: And those severe Cen-

Isa. 58. 1.

Matt. 7. 1.

And

And this Corruption of thinking too favourably of what we act our selves and have espous'd, mixeth it self with all other Duties; too many of us not so much judging of them as they are in themselves, and as they ought to be circumstantiated by us, but as they are perform'd by them. And then be sure they shall not want a whole Litter of Reserves, Palliations, and excuses, to cover their Defects with. But this is to serve God partially and by halves, and not with that Sincerity and Integrity he demands of us. All must be uniform and of a Piece; no Viciousness, either in the Manner, or Matter of what we address to Him. We are not to do Justice unjustly and unmercifully; not *to fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of Wickedness*, as the Prophet speaks. Not to marr a good Act with a bad Appendage or Circumstance. If we do this, it is enough to make us liable to the Man of God's Rebuke, that we halt between two Opinions. But much more obnoxious shall we be hereunto, if we offend both in the Matter and Manner of what we act; if we undertake a sinful Thing, and manage it sinfully. Whensoever we do this, God and our own Consciences well inform'd will be the truest Judges. But it ought to be our especial Care not to be so wicked; not so to halt, least we come short of our Journeys End; not reach Heaven, but fall into Hell. And that we may not be so wretched and miserable, we are, with the Royal Psalmist, to make God's Word a *Lanthorn unto our feet, and a Light unto our paths*; not to swerve and go astray from his Commandments; to contend for the Faith once

1 Tim. i 8.

9. 10.

Isai 58. 4.

Ps 119. 105.

once delivered to the Saints, and to buy the Jude ver. 3.
Truth and sell it not; as the Wise Man advises Prov. 23. 23.
and enjoyns.

IV. And so I pass to the Fourth Thing, that
we are to assert and vindicate Truth, when
oppos'd and contradicted.

And this I gather and infer from God's
sending, and *Elijah's* going to a perverse and
rebellious People; a People grown old in Wick-
edness, and that had continued their Idola-
trous separating Methods thro' several Kings
Reigns, and that were not likely to be fond of
Reformation, having a King over them that
was the worst of all. Yet tho' they were thus
hardened in their Impieties, *the Head sick, and* Isai. 1. 5, 6.
the whole heart faint; and from the sole even unto the
head, there was no soundness, but wounds, and
bruises, and putrifying sores; they were very much
corrupted as to their Spiritual Estate; the Pro-
phet boldly accosts them, tells them of their
Faults and what God expected from them.
Such a Message he could not but be sensible, was
attended with Danger; divers of his Function
had suffered no less than Death from the contrary
Faction, from the cruelty of an *Ahab* and a
Jezabel; and he could not promise himself but
that the like might in Probability befall him.
But he more regarded the doing of God's
Message than his life, and preferr'd Obedience
to whatsoever might happen. And that it was
God's Message we are assur'd, First, in that in
his Prayer to him, he calls himself *God's Ser-*
vant, and said he did *all these things at his word*.
Secondly, in that God miraculously attested to
D it

1 Kings 18. it when the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed
 36, 38, 39. the burnt Sacrifice, and the Wood, and the Stones,
 and the Dust, and licked up the water that was
 in the trench. And Thirdly, in that when the
 People saw it, they fell on their faces, and said,
 the Lord he is the God, the Lord he is the God.

And herein he hath given us an excellent
 Example what we are to do under such Cir-
 cumstances. We are not to fear the Faces of Men,
 when God bids us speak. We are to admo-
 nish them of their Impiety and Sin, tho' Bonds
 or Imprisonment, or much worse, is the Con-
 sequent of it. Tho' we are not all Prophets,
 nor the Sons of the Prophets, yet we have
 Souls to save; And it is better to lose the whole
 World, and all that is dear unto us in it, than
 Luke 12. 4, 5. them. And therefore we are to obey and fear
 him that hath power to cast into Hell, more than
 all Earthly Powers whatsoever, who can do no
 more than kill the body. We are humbly to
 remonstrate to such workers of Iniquity, not
 to be ashamed of Christ and his Word; but
 to confess him and it courageously and perse-
 veringly. We know him that hath told us,
 Heb. 10. 38. that if any of us draw back, his Soul shall have
 Mat. 10. 33. no pleasure in him. And that whosoever shall deny
 him before men, him will he also deny before his
 Father which is in Heaven. I do not mean that
 we are to hazard all for little unnecessary Pun-
 ctilio's, for meerly speculative Opinions that
 have no Influence upon practise, but for the
 great and substantial Doctrines of the Gospel.
 These we are in the Spirit of Meekness, and all
 the honest and just ways we can to vindicate
 and stand up for; not let them be trampled
 upon and rejected by a Spirit of Atheism and
 Profane-

Profaneness, but by Pen and Tongue assert their Authority and Sacredness. The Apostle hath told us that *the time will come, when Men will* ^{2 Tim 4. 2.} *not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own* ^{3. 4.} *Lusts shall they heap unto themselves Teachers, having itching Ears; and shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and shall turn unto Fables.* But notwithstanding, Timothy was to preach the word, to be instant in season, and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long suffering and Doctrine. The Apostles were threatened and charged by the Jewish Sanhedrim, not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. But ^{Acts 4. 17.} ^{18. 19.} Peter and John answered, and said unto them, *whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you, more then unto God, judge ye.* And the same may we return, and ought to do so, to all the Adversaries of the Truth; and therefore, as they continued to speak the word with boldness, so must we if we would not be of the number of them, that draw back to perdition, ^{Heb. 10. 39.} *but of them who believe to the saving of the Soul.* What was it that brought our Saviour to his Cross, but the Preaching of unwelcome Truths? And shall not we do as he did? Do we War a good Warfare, and behave our selves like good Souldiers of Jesus Christ, if we start back upon the appearance of Danger, and betray our Master's Cause by a timorous Silence and a trimming Hypocrisie? Whosoever is Christ's, certainly such a Man is not. We are not only to follow him into the Wilderness to be feasted with his Viands and Loaves, but into the Garden, and to Mount Calvary, to Bleed and to Die with him, if we would be his Disciples, and have him confess us such before the Holy ^{Luke 12. 8.} Angels.

A Sermon Preach'd

Angels. Every runaway Souldier is a reproach to his Captain, and so shall we be to our Blessed Lord, if we desert him in the Day of Battel, flee when we should fight, and are not constant unto the Death. *There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers (says St. Paul) whose mouths must be stopped; who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. This witness is true; wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the faith.* And it is as true that there is a Spirit of Dissention, Immorality, and Heterodoxy gone out amongst us, that ought to be rebuk'd and silenc'd, by our speaking things which becometh sound doctrine. And they that will not have the World so reform'd, will, I fear, repent other Measures when it is too late. At least we do not all that we can for Truth, when negligently and unconcernedly we see it insulted, and ridicul'd, and denied: And they that in so not doing, can boast of the *Wisdom of the Serpent*, should remember that the *Innocency of the Dove* is to be added to it. But how they can be innocent, that for a present Ease can give up the Honour of their Lord, and hear his Word blasphemed and perverted, and call this Moderation and Temper, is just as true and rational, as for any Man to call himself a good Subject, and yet be guilty of High Treason. And if an Earthly Governour will greatly resent such an Indignity and Affront, and punish it accordingly, we must think that He who is King of Kings will more severely censure it, and not hold such presumptuous Wretches guiltless. In a Word, *those that honour him, he will honour; but those that despise*

Titus 1. 10,
11, 13.

Ib. 2. 1.

Mat. 10. 16.

1 Sam. 2. 30.

despise him shall be lightly esteemed; was what he justly denounced against a Partial Priest and Governour, and what he as justly executed. 1 Sam. 4. 11.
18.

V. But Fifthly and Lastly, it is the undoubted Interest both of Prince and People to have True Religion well Establish'd and Preserv'd.

How this is to be done, I shall not take upon me to prescribe. Tho' I cannot but judge it obligatory upon all to discountenance and decry all false ways of Worship whatsoever, as contrary to the Sacred Word. This is what our common Christianity, and the respect we have for the Gospel exacts of us. And how we can be true Votaries and Friends to it without this, I must own, I do not understand. I take it granted that God doth Infinitely Prize and Prefer his Will and Truths to all things else; and that it is our Duty to do the like. But how we can so act, and yet comply with, or at least connive at contrary Measures, they that are concern'd, would do well impartially, and with a due regard to Divine Authority, to consider. *We are all of us to give an account* Rom. 14. 10.
of our selves to God, and to be judged by Him 11, 12.
according to our Works; but how can we expect a favourable Sentence from him, or that he will deal with us as true Believers in that his Day, if we in ours have provoked and griev'd his Holy Spirit, and made Shipwrack of Faith and a Good Conscience? We horribly mock and deceive our selves, and are as Senseless as Wicked, if we more value and pursue a temporary quiet than an Eternal one; or
shall

shall do any thing, in behalf of this, to forfeit and lose that. The exchange is too unequal, one would think, to be so easily and rashly made; and they that are so imprudent as to submit unto and practise it, must, whatever they pretend, have but little Faith in God and his Christ, and be more zealously concerned for Earthly, than Heavenly Possessions and Treasures. But they are to observe, that, if they will have their good things in this Life, at any rate, and upon any Account, and stick at no Profligateness and Impiety to compass them, they shall be without, and far from them in the other. That, if they will be *Dives's* now, they shall not, cannot be *Lazarus's* then; shall never come into *Abraham's* Bosom, and have their Portion amongst the Blessed. It is only Righteousness and true Piety, Honouring and Obeying God as he hath Commanded, that can confer upon and secure such a State unto us: Without this we shall never come into the Joy of our Lord. And therefore such a way of living and acting as will procure this, must be our truest Interest and surest Gain

And if there was nothing else in Religion to encourage a vigorous and conscientious Prosecuting it, and to endear it to us, this would be more than enough (and I shall mention nothing else) when it infinitely, and beyond all Comparison, surpasses all the Honours, and Pleasures, of a Dying Life. And would we but once be fully perswaded of this Truth, all other things would Weigh but little with us: Obedience and Righteousness, and a good Conscience would be the most Precious and Valuable things, and we should accordingly live

live and die in God's fear and service. And that it is, in fine, the most Principal Wisdom, and best way of benefiting and doing good to our selves so to act, not to serve *Baal* but *G O D*, not Sin, but Holiness; and never to depart from that way of Righteousness he hath propos'd unto and set us in the Divine Oracles, by any false Comments, and pretended Illustrations, and as Unchristian a Practice, is so Manifest, as that Eternal Happiness (the undoubted consequence of so acting) is preferable to what is but for a Moment. I therefore close all with that of the Blessed Jesus to the Church of *Smyrna*. I know thy Works, and Tribulation, and Poverty (but thou art Rich) and I know the Blasphemy of them, which say they are *Jews*, and are not; but are of the Synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: Behold the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have Tribulation Ten Days. *Be faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life:*

Which He who is the Resurrection and the Life vouchsafe unto us; To whom with the Father and the Blessed Spirit, be all Honour, Might, Majesty, Thanksgiving, and Obedience now and for evermore, Amen.

F I N I S.

The above information was obtained from the files of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, at Washington, D.C., and is being furnished to you for your information.

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